

The morality which Porphyry inculcated was elevated and pure; his religion was mystical to such a degree that none but an expert philosopher could follow him into the refinements of his abstractions; but he had for the Christian Church a "theological hatred" of extraordinary bitterness. The treatise — in fifteen books — in which he assailed the Divinity of Christ apparently set a fashion in anti-Christian literature. We hear, for example, of another unnamed philosopher who "vomited three books against the Christian religion," and the violence with which Lactantius denounces him as "an accomplished hypocrite" makes one suspect that his work had a considerable success. Still better known was Hierocles, Governor at one time of Palmyra, and then transferred to the royal province of Bithynia, who wrote a book to which he gave the name of *The Friend of Truth*, and addressed it, "To the Christians." Its interest lies chiefly in the fact that its author compares with the miracles wrought by Christ those attributed to Apollonius of Tyana, and denies divinity to both. Lactantius tells us that this Hierocles was "author and counsellor of the persecution,"\* and we may judge, therefore, that there existed among the pagans a powerful party bitterly opposed to Christianity, carrying on a vigorous campaign against it, and urging upon the Emperors the advisability of a sharp repressive policy.

They would have no difficulty in making out a case against the Christians which on the face of it

\**De Mort. Persec.*, c. 16.